

WXOW-TV 19, La Crosse, WI LOCALISM INITIATIVES

Local News

Provide details on your station's investment in local news. WXOW has made a significant investment in local news. Presently, one-third of all operating expenses for our station are devoted to local news gathering and broadcasting. Furthermore, 60% of our full and part time staff is employed in our local news department.

- **How many local newscasts are aired per week?** WXOW airs a 90 minute newscast on a Monday – Friday basis at 530am, a 30 minute cast on a Monday – Friday basis at 5pm, a 30 minute cast on a Monday – Saturday basis at 6pm and a 35 minute cast on a Monday – Sunday basis at 10pm. In addition, WXOW airs a five minute newscast each weekday morning at 725 and 825am, as well as two minute cut-ins at 758 and 858am. Also, four local weather reports are aired between 7 and 9am each weekday morning and two weather reports air between 7 and 8am each Saturday and Sunday mornings. All total, WXOW airs 23 separate full newscasts along with several shorter cut-ins and reports. Beyond our own airwaves, WXOW also produces five minute news reports that run twice per hour from 7am to 12 midnight each weekday on CNN Headline News on area cable systems.
- **What percentage of your daily programming is devoted to local news?** 15% of the daily programming on WXOW is devoted to local news.
- **Has your station added newscasts in the morning or at other times?** WXOW's commitment to local news programming has continued to grow over time. 15 years ago, WXOW aired just a weekday 6pm newscast and a daily 10pm newscast. Since that time, we have added a weekday 5pm news, a weekday morning news and a Saturday 6pm news. The morning newscast started out as a one-hour show and recently moved to 90 minutes.

Give examples of how your website is used to enhance local news coverage. On a daily basis, WXOW updates our website with local news and sports stories. In addition, we provide comprehensive weather information, including updated daily forecasts several times per day, a seven day forecast, local radar, current temps around the region, almanac information and current conditions. WXOW also provides a free Internet weather service that allows the user to identify weather for very specific locations, such as their home, school or place of work. Our website also includes information about community events, such as fund raisers for local non profit organizations. Also, we have provided a great deal of election year information on our web site, including up to the minute election results on the night of the primary and general elections.

Local Public Affairs

- **Describe all daily or weekly programs devoted to local public affairs, local politics, community activities, and similar issues.** In each and every newscast that airs on WXOW, you will find information pertaining to local public affairs, community activities, and every two years, you will find local political information in every newscast.
- **Are there regularly scheduled segments on local public affairs included in your local newscasts?** WXOW provides regularly scheduled public affairs segments each weekday in our morning and our 5pm newscast. These segments are approximately two to three minutes long and they allow local organizations an opportunity to tell our viewers about upcoming special events and/or projects that may be taking place in the area.

Creating or Selecting Programming

- **Describe your station's efforts and practices for determining the types of programming you air.** WXOW considers many sources when considering what type of programming is needed in our viewing area. One primary source for us has been our local United Way. United Way conducts research within their service area that identifies the primary issues and concerns of people in this area. Based on the most pressing issues, we have produced and broadcast several Town Hall Meetings over the years. We have covered issues such as Drug and Alcohol abuse, Youth concerns and Health Care. We bring community leaders and the general public together to search for answers and information in these topic areas. These Town Hall Meetings will take place from 7-8pm and often times are broadcast live during this prime time hour
- **Provide any examples when your station preempted network programming in order to air other programming of more interest to your local community.** We have preempted our network on numerous occasions over the years and of late to broadcast programs of special local interest. Examples would include our Town Hall Meetings, which take place once to four times a year; local debates, including local mayor's races, 3rd District Congressional races and US Senate; our annual Children's Miracle Network telethon; local sporting events such as Packers preseason football, a University of Wisconsin La Crosse football game every fall and high school girls and boys' hockey and basketball games every March.

Emergency Programming

- **Describe any live and/or on-the-scene coverage of emergencies, weather, traffic, crime, and similar events, including any positive impact of your coverage on the local community.** WXOW has provided live coverage of local emergencies, traffic and severe weather. A recent emergency that we provided live coverage of took place in downtown La Crosse. At about 820am one morning, an office building exploded, demolishing the building and sending debris in all directions. We identified the area to our viewers about five minutes after the explosion occurred by using our downtown "weather camera." We were able to provide information

regarding why and how the explosion took place, the condition of the building and the adjoining buildings, traffic information and confirmation of no casualties or serious injuries, as no one was in the building at the time of the explosion. We also had a reporter at the scene by 845am and provided live reports throughout the morning from the location of the explosion.

Severe weather coverage is an ongoing priority of WXOW. Anytime we feel our viewers could be threatened by severe weather, we will provide live reports, preempting programming whenever needed. This type of information is provided to our viewers numerous times over the course of the year.

Finally, each weekday morning we provide traffic information to our viewers. During our morning newscast we will provide two traffic reports, letting viewers know of any road construction or dangerous winter driving conditions.

- **Describe your station's investment in ENG or weather forecasting equipment.** WXOW has made a major investment in both ENG and weather equipment. Our station has a fully equipped live van that we use for live reports and live local programming. We have three weather cameras, one located on our rooftop used for time lapse photography, one on our tower to show weather as it approaches our home viewing area and one located in downtown La Crosse. In addition, we have invested a significant sum of money in weather technology, including weather tools such as MicroCast, FutureCast, StormTracker and the Genesis/Metline computer. This expensive, but important technology provides the information that our viewers need when weather takes a turn for the worse.
- **Does your station participate in AMBER or EAS?** WXOW participates in both the Amber Alert program and in EAS. Fortunately, we have yet to have to implement the Amber Alert system, but we are ready and prepared to when the time comes. Our EAS system is utilized on an ongoing basis during severe weather.

Political Programming

- **Describe any candidate debates sponsored or aired. Include examples of candidates declining debate offers.** WXOW has aired many political debates over the years. This past year alone we have produced and aired a 3rd District congressional debate. This debate aired three different times, giving our viewers multiple options to watch. This 3rd District debate has been an every election year event for us.

We aired two US Senate debates, one produced by our state broadcast association and one that we participated in the production of in our market. For the past 10 years or so, we have broadcasted a US Senate debate on an every-four-year basis.

We aired three presidential debates and one vice president debate.

In the past, we have aired debates for mayor of La Crosse and for mayor of Onalaska, WI.

- **Does your station offer candidates other types of free air time?** WXOW offers free time to candidates. First, any debate we do is free, and each debate airs for one hour. Secondly, we have provided a two minute slot in Good Morning America each Saturday and Sunday starting two weeks before the primary and running each weekend up to the general election. These time periods were offered free to the candidates to provide our viewers with some political dialogue and our local candidates used the time slot to tell viewers about themselves and why they would be a good choice for the office they were pursuing. Finally, we aired candidate profiles and covered many candidate stories from the primary up to the general election in our daily local newscasts. In total, we made the commitment, and have lived up to that commitment, to air 30 minutes of free candidate and political information each week from the primary to the general election.
- **Describe your station's efforts to analyze important political/ballot issues or candidates. Are local political issues discussed, or candidates interviewed, during newscasts or public affairs programming on a regular basis?** We have had several important political issues that we have covered and reported on in recent years. This election year the issue of a school referendum for the city of La Crosse has been a major issue. This referendum is up for vote in the general election. We have covered this story extensively, providing views from both those in favor of the referendum and from those who are against it. Also, in a recent election, we covered extensively the issue of a north-south highway corridor through the city of La Crosse. We broadcasted a Town Hall Meeting live in prime time to provide viewers with information on this issue. The corridor question was decided by a referendum vote.
- **Does the station cover local campaign and/or convention events?** WXOW has provided significant local campaign events. This year, the state of Wisconsin was recognized as one of the "swing states," and as such, we received numerous visits from the presidential candidates and many of their supporters. We carried two local presidential speeches live, and provided significant local reaction each time as well. When the national politician came to our area, we provided extensive coverage to our local viewers.
- **Describe the station's participation in promoting voter registration drives.** WXOW airs public service announcements encouraging our viewers to exercise their right to vote this election year.
- **Give examples of how your website is used to enhance political coverage.** When a visitor goes to wxow.com, they will find extensive election information, including stories of local interest and information about the 2004 primary results, information on debates, election resources and other election news. On election night, WXOW will provide up to the minute election information on our web site. We have

computers that interface directly to AP and several area election centers to give us the most current information for us to pass along to our viewers both on our air and on our web site.

Civic, Cultural and Other Community-Responsive Programming

- **Describe all programming targeted at particular segments of the community, including the number of hours weekly, and the nature of the programming.** In addition to the local religious programming we carry for two hours each Sunday morning, WXOW airs a local weekly outdoors show called Northland Adventures. This program airs every Sunday night at 1035pm and covers outdoors activities from hunting and fishing to bird watching and hiking. It is a highly praised and award winning show, and one we are very proud to carry on our station.
- **Describe any coverage of local events, such as local sports, museum openings, fairs, holiday events, local theater, fire or police outreach events.** WXOW has provided coverage of numerous local events on an ongoing basis. Some examples include: We provide extensive high school and local university sports coverage. We broadcast live every year girls and boys high school hockey and basketball games, and a UW-La Crosse football game. We have aired several stories on the La Crosse Children's Museum, including several on their opening just a few years ago.

Each year for the past 13 years, WXOW produces and airs the annual WXOW Holiday Concert. This event is held on a Monday night in December. Eight area high schools concert choirs along with the Viterbo University choir put on a free performance that attracts around 1500 people each year. WXOW records the event for broadcast on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Also, all those who come to watch the live event are encouraged to bring non perishable food items that will be donated to area food pantries. A tremendous amount of food is collected on this wonderful night of holiday cheer.

- **Describe your station's coverage of important issues affecting the local community, such as consumer rip-offs, smoking and other health hazards, safety, drinking & driving, domestic abuse, and similar issues.** WXOW has been involved with many community related projects and initiatives, and most recently we are leading a community effort with an ongoing project focusing on the ill affects of smoking, and providing people with the help they need to stop. We provide "Healthy Living" reports each week and continue to alert viewers on new information and available resources to help them kick the habit.

Music

- **Does your station provide on-air opportunities for local artists, either periodically or on a regular basis?** WXOW has committed to sponsoring a new initiative called the Garage Band Contest. The program is being created by the Wisconsin Music Teachers Association, and there will be six regional contests conducted around the state this coming spring. WXOW will be sponsoring the La Crosse regional. We will be promoting the event and covering it as well. Six area

bands and or musicians will compete to be the top “Garage Band” from this area. The regional winner will advance to the state competition. In order to compete, one member of the performing group must participate in a high school music program of some kind.

Station Participation in Community Activities

- **Give examples of your station’s support of non-profit and charity initiatives, such as telethons and other efforts on behalf of the March of Dimes, United Way, Make-A-Wish, etc. Are station executives on the boards of such groups?** Every month, you will find WXOW involved in several community causes. On average, we have two to three station sponsored causes that we are involved with each month. Whether it is for the Alzheimer’s Association, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, March of Dimes, American Heart Association and many more. Each year our station broadcasts live the Children’s Miracle Network Telethon. Our news director and morning anchor serve on the CMN advisory board, and our station provides ongoing reports on CMN events throughout the year. Our station has also been a strong supporter of the United Way. Our General Manager has been on the United Way board, including serving as president. Each year our station conducts a company campaign and we have been a “Pacesetter” company on many occasions, including for this year’s campaign.
- **Provide examples of how your station promotes causes not tied to a particular organization, such as health screenings, free vaccinations, nutritional advice, community fundraisers, blood drives, disaster relief efforts, etc.** These types of projects are a hallmark of WXOW. Over the years, we have tackled many community projects and causes. We have sponsored numerous “Neighbor Savor Saturdays.” These were opportunities for people to learn CPR. We have also sponsored a “Tot Saver Saturday,” an event that focused specifically on giving CPR to children.

We brought to an end this past spring a year long effort to bring attention to healthy living issues that face our viewers, which we called “Healthy Living: Today, Not Tomorrow.” We held two Town Hall Meetings, both broadcasted in prime time, discussing health care related issues. From the first Town Hall Meeting, we identified the fact that there was one thing we could control more so than any other regarding health care, and that was our own health. We conducted a community wide healthy living program that included signing up over 1500 people who agreed to lose weight and make improved diet and exercise decisions. We also signed up two teams who competed against each other, with both teams striving to lose the most weight. It was a great initiative that saw hundreds of people lose weight and commit to healthier lifestyle choices.

- **Give examples of station involvement in education initiatives, such as partnering with schools to promote their needs for school supplies, or promoting immunizations or after school programs.** One of our most successful education initiatives is our News 19 Weather Academy program. Our staff of three

full time meteorologists will put on a school assembly followed by an open house with live weathercasts from a school in our viewing area. The weather staff will conduct weather related experiments and provide some hands on learning for the kids. This event is held on a once-a-month basis during the school year and will usually involve 150 to 250 kids.

- **Does your station cover school board or PTA meetings, or important education-related issues? Give examples.** Our station reports on many local school boards and city councils. If a community is looking at building a new school, or making major improvements to existing schools, or closing existing schools, we will follow the story and provide our viewers with the critical information they need to be informed on the issue.

At WXOW-TV, we are proud of our community service and the vital role we play in informing and educating our viewing audience.